

Contributed

A FRESH START TOWARD CHRIST.

By Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, D. D.

A man has just gone out of my room who said to me: "I am going to begin the new year with a **fresh start**." All his life he had been drifting farther and farther off from where his conscience told him that he ought to be. His "fresh start" was toward Jesus Christ. And every unconverted person who reads these lines ought to take the same step; you expect to do it at **some** time before you die; do it now. Jesus Christ waited for you all last year, and many years before it; hasten to him at once.

Do not wait for any keener sense of guilt; people often discover more of their own weakness and wickedness after they have come to Jesus than they ever dreamed of before. Do not wait for more feeling. If you had fallen from a ferryboat into the North river, filled with floating ice, would you wait to feel colder before you grasped the rope flung out to you? When Jesus told the blind beggar to come to him, he cast off his garment and came straightway. When the leper besought Christ to heal him, the Master bade him "go show himself to the priest." The suffering wretch did not stop to count his scabs or scales, nor inquire, "What good will it do me to go?" He asked no questions, but started, and "as he went he was healed." The path of obedience was the path of salvation; it will be just so with you.

When Jesus encountered James and John on the lake shore of Gennesaret, he simply said to them, "Follow me." He did **not** come twice after them, nor did he need to speak twice to them. Their destiny hung upon ten minutes; so may yours. Suppose that these two fishermen had treated the Savior as you have always treated him, where were their wonderful history, their priceless service, and their crown of glory? Their destiny turned on a "Yes" or a "No." They did not stop to cry over their sins, or to bargain with their new Master as to their support; they quit their nets, rose up and walked off with Jesus Christ, not knowing whither he would lead them.

You, too, my friend, must forsake your "net."—A single favorite prevailing sin may be a net that entangles your soul in its meshes. The "net" which my friend who has just left this room is quitting, is a dangerous tampering with a brandy bottle. I have seen hundreds of awakened souls drawn back into hardened impenitence by sensual temptations; the decanter, the gaming-table, the playhouse, or the appetite for licentious gratification have coiled their net around the feet, and held them from following Christ.

Perhaps your besetting sin is a love of making money and in ways that do not satisfy your conscience. Then stop it at whatever sacrifice. You cannot make an honest prayer while there is a dishonest coin in your pocket. Just as it is the **hidden** root which holds a tree

against every effort to move it, and the **hidden** rock that staves the hole in the bottom of a vessel, so it is the **secret** sin that oftenest keeps a soul from Christ. Search your heart to the bottom, and whatever Christ bids you give up, **surrender** it. Perhaps fear of ridicule or the desire to stand well with your irreligious associates may be influencing you. But you cannot keep on good terms with sinners and live on good terms with your Savior. Take a bold stand, if some of your acquaintances do stare at you or sneer at you. Perhaps your courageous coming out for Christ may startle them and shame them, and be the means of saving their souls. I knew of two young ladies who so impressed their circle of friends by their decided stand for Christ, that a deep religious interest was started, which finally spread through the congregation. Obey Christ, and he will take care of the consequences.

In order to be saved by Jesus Christ, there are two things that are indispensable. One is repentance of sin, and the other is faith. They both mean **doing**. They are not frames or feeling; they are **acts**. Repentance is a resolute turning away from your old sins, with a full purpose to live a different life. Faith is a resolute grasp of Jesus Christ, binding your soul to him as your atoning Savior. You must put your whole heart into both. Nor can you consider yourself a converted man or a saved man until you are **joined by the Holy Spirit** to the Infinite Son of God. The Spirit will help, waits to help you, and every hour that you refuse to obey conscience and follow Jesus, you are resisting that divine, loving Spirit. In the saving of your soul you must act and Christ must act. Your faith is your laying hold on Jesus, and doing whatever he bids you. Jesus will forgive your sins, cleanse your soul, and give you strength to follow him. That is his doing.

Take these two truths and act on them. Go to Jesus in honest prayer. The "Inquiry Meeting" for you is a meeting of your own heart with him; no pastor, or evangelist, or friend can be a substitute for your Savior. One honest hour with Jesus Christ is the first step to which you must come sooner or later, or else die in your sins. One honest hour with Jesus may give you a new life in this world, and life everlasting up yonder. A single decisive step—straight to Jesus Christ—will give you such a "Happy New Year" as you never knew before.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Send the road is clear before you
When the old Spring fret comes o'er you
And the Red Gods call for you.

—Kipling.

Some one suggests that the "almighty dollar" ought to be changed to the "Almighty's Dollar." This would put it right—"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts."

What moots it to say that you love a man's soul, when you don't care if he lives or dies, or if his family is starving?—Graham Taylor.